

## FRANKENWEENIE

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



I am a fan of Tim Burton films. If you are, too, then you will love this one. *Frankweenie* is a glorious tribute in every way to the classic horror movies. I loved the black and white which seemed to add so much to the quality of the amazing animation. *Frankweenie* ranks up there with *Edward Scissorhands* in terms of sentimentality and heart. How we deal or don't deal with death is the key that unlocks so many important messages about family, faith, love, hope, science and how sometimes you are not ready, willing or able to let go of a loved one.

The mourning process is unique and, for children, especially difficult. For many kids, losing a pet is the first in a series of many losses in life. Burton creates the space and time to fully observe, appreciate and understand the experience. Emotions are evoked using a series of the most expressive eyes ever created for stop action animation. I tell you that these characters are ALIVE!

The actors who lend their voices to the images do a wonderful job. So much so that you forget that there are actors behind the scenes. Martin Landau as a science teacher, who bears more than a little resemblance to the late Vincent Price, delivers an amazing speech to a group of narrow-minded parents who would rather suppress science than understand it. Having an open mind and an open heart are traits of those who lead curious lives. Asking why? Why not? How can I? Will this work? Trying, failing and trying again; those are character traits often missing in the kids we see who give up or just stop asking questions because life has not afforded them the environment to thrive.

The bottom line of it all is intention. What your intention is determines the outcome of the experiment. In the classroom, in the laboratory and in life, if your intentions are good, everything will usually work out in the end. If attempted with love, life will be a series of challenges and confrontations, but you will not be alone and you will overcome any giant barriers, attacks, setbacks and losses with courage, faith and determination to keep going forward. Although *Frankenweenie* may have been meant as a trick-or-treat offering, this film is all treat from start to finish.

I give *Frankenweenie* five couches. Take the kids. Take the Kleenex.

